And finally, the alternative to détente—there are those who say because of the way the Russians treat their minorities we should break off our relations with them, we should not trade with them, we should deny them credits, and then maybe they will change. Well, first, they aren't going to change if we do that. It will have exactly the opposite effect.

But the second point is, if we go back to the old policy of confrontation, not negotiating to limit nuclear arms and other arms possibly in the future, not negotiate with the hope of resolving differences at the conference table rather than on the battlefield, then what you have to do is to face the necessity for the United States to enter an arms race, and instead of an $8 billion increase in the arms budget, you would have $100 billion increase in the arms budget, and eventually you would confront what would be a massive crisis between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Mideast, in Europe, and possibly even in the Mediterranean, as well as in the Caribbean area, where our interests are in conflict.

I would simply conclude my answer with this: Nobody, I know, will question my credentials with regard to the Soviet system and my disagreements with it. I would also say, however, that I have learned that it is much better to have your voice heard within the Kremlin than outside.

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Let me tell you the figures. Before we started talking to the Soviets in our period of negotiation, 400 Soviet Jews a year got out. In the first year of our talks, 17,000 got out. Last year 35,000 got out.

Now, they still aren't doing what we would do or what we would want them to do, but it is far better to have the voice of the President of the United States heard from within the Kremlin than the outside, because those walls are mighty thick, I can tell you.

March 21, 1974 - Secretary Kissinger, Press Conference

It is also true that the difficulties in the passage of MFN legislation and the threats to the credits raise some questions about understandings that the Soviet Union had every reason to believe were valid of what our purposes were, or what the United States would contribute for its side of the detente.

June 5, 1974 - President Nixon's Address at the U. S. Naval Academy at the 124th Commencement Ceremony.

Eloquent appeals are now being made for the United States, through its foreign policy, to transform the internal as well as the international behavior of other countries, and especially that of the Soviet Union. This issue sharply poses the dilemma I outlined at the outset. It affects not only our relation with the Soviet Union but also our posture toward many nations whose internal systems we totally disagree with, as they do with ours.

Our foreign policy, therefore, must reflect our ideals and it must reflect our purposes. We can never, as Americans, acquiesce in the suppression of human liberties. We must do all that we reasonably can to promote justice, and for this reason we continue to adhere firmly to certain humane principles, not only in appropriate international forums, but also in our private exchanges with other governments--where this can be effective. But we must recognize that we are more faithful to our ideals by being concerned with results and we achieve more results through diplomatic action than through hundreds of eloquent speeches.

But there are limits to what we can do, and we must ask ourselves some very hard questions--questions which I know members of this class have asked themselves many times. What is our capability to change the domestic structure of other nations? Would a slowdown or reversal of detente help or hurt the positive evolution of other social systems? What price--in terms of renewed conflict--are we willing to pay to bring pressure to bear for humane causes?

Not by our choice, but by our capability, our primary concern in foreign policy must be to help influence the international conduct of nations in the world arena. We would not welcome the intervention of other countries in our domestic affairs, and we cannot expect them to be cooperative when we seek to intervene directly in theirs.

We cannot gear our foreign policy to transformation of other societies. In the nuclear age, our first responsibility must be the prevention of a war that could destroy all societies. We must never lose sight of this fundamental truth of modern international life. Peace between nations with totally different systems is also a high moral objective.

KISSINGER STATEMENT ON DETENTE, SFRC

SEPTEMBER 19, 1974

Where the age-old antagonism between freedom and tyranny is concerned we are not neutral. But other imperatives impose limits on our ability to produce internal changes in foreign countries. Consciousness of our limits is recognition of the necessity of peace — not moral callousness. The preservation of human life and human society are moral values too.

We must be mature enough to recognize that to be stable a relationship must provide advantages to both sides and that the most constructive international relationships are those in which both parties perceive an element of gain. Moscow will benefit from certain measures just as we will from others. The balance cannot be struck on each issue every day, but only over the whole range of relations and over a period of time.

These were all primarily regulatory agreements conferring no immediate benefits on the Soviet Union but serving as blueprints for an expanded economic relationship if the political improvement continued.

This approach commanded widespread domestic approval. It was considered a natural outgrowth of political progress. At no time were issues regarding Soviet domestic political practices raised. Indeed, not until after the 1972 agreements was the Soviet domestic order invoked as a reason for arresting or reversing the progoress so painstakingly achieved.

This sudden, ex post facto form of linkage raises serious questions:

— For the Soviet Union, it casts doubt on our reliability as a negotiating partner;

— The signifiance of trade, originally envisaged as only one ingredient of a complex and evolving relationship, is inflated out of all proportion;

— The hoped-for results of policy become transformed into preconditions for any policy at all.

We recognize the depth and validity of the moral concerns expressed by those who oppose — or put conditions on — expanded trade with the USSR. But a sense of proportion must be maintained about the leverage our economic relations give us with the USSR:

— Denial of economic relations cannot by itself achieve what it failed to do when it was part of a determined policy of political and military confrontation.

— The economic bargaining ability of Most Favored Nation status is marginal. MFN grants no special privilege to the USSR; in fact it is a misnomer since we have such agreements with over 100 countries. To enact it would be to remove a discriminatory hold-over of the days of the Cold War. To continue to deny it is more a political than an economic act.

— Trade benefits are not a one-way street; the laws of mutual advantage operate or there will be no trade.

— The technology that flows to the USSR as a result of expanded US-Soviet trade may have a few indirect uses for military production. But with our continuing restrictions on strategic exports, we can maintain adequate controls — and we intend to do so. Moreover, the same technology has been available to the USSR and will be increasingly so from other non-Communist sources. Boycott denies us a means of influence and possible commercial gain; it does not deprive the USSR of technology.

— The actual and potential flow of credits from the US represents a tiny fraction of the capital available to the USSR domestically and elsewhere, including Western Europe and Japan. But it does allow us to exercise some influence through our ability to control the scope of trade relationships.

— Over time, trade and investment may leaven the autarkic tendencies of the Soviet system, invite gradual association of the Soviet economy with the world economy, and foster a degree of interdependence that adds an element of stability to the political equation.

* * *

Both as a government and as a people we have made the attitude of the American people clear on countless occasions, in ways that have produced results. I believe that both the Executive and the Congress, each playing its proper role, have been effective. With respect to the specific issue of emigration:

-- The education exit tax of 1971 is no longer being collected. We have been assured that it will not be reapplied.

-- Hardship cases submitted to the Soviet Government have been given increased attention, and remedies have been forthcoming in many well-known instances.

-- The volume of Jewish emigration has increased from a trickle to tens of thousands.

-- And we are now moving toward an understanding that should significantly diminish the obstacles to emigration and ease the hardship of prospective emigrants.

We have accomplished much. But we cannot demand that the Soviet Union, in effect, suddenly reverse five decades of Soviet, and centuries of Russian, history. Such an attempt would be futile and at the same time hazard all that has already been achieved. Changes in Soviet society have already occurred, and more will come. But they are most likely to develop through an evolution that can best go forward in an environment of decreasing international tensions. A renewal of the Cold War will hardly encourage the Soviet Union to change its emigration policies or adopt a more benevolent attitude towards dissent.

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We must never forget that the process of detente depends ultimately on habits and modes of conduct that extend beyond the letters of agreements to the spirit of relations as a whole. This is why the whole process must be carefully nurtured.

In cataloging the desirable, we must take care not to jeopardize what is attainable. We must consider what alternative policies are available, and what their consequences would be. And, the implications of alternatives must be examined, not just in terms of a single issue, but for how they might effect the entire range of Soviet-American relations and the prospects for world peace.

We must assess not only individual challenges to detente, but also their cumulative impact:

If we justify each agreement with Moscow only when we can show unilateral gain;

If we strive for an elusive strategic "superiority";

If we systematically block benefits to the Soviet Union;

If we try to transform the Soviet system by pressure;

If, in short, we look for final results before we agree to any results, then we would be reviving the doctrines of liberation and massive retaliation of the 1950s. And we would do so at a time when Soviet physical power and influence on the world are greater than a quarter century ago when those policies were devised and failed. The futility of such a course is as certain as its danger.

With respect to the second question, the negotiations between the Senators and myself, the difficulty, such as it is, arises from the fact that there are some assurances that have been given to me that I can defend and which I can transmit. There are some interpretations of these assurances which some of the Senators would like to make. And that is their privilege. And we understand that they would apply their interpretations as a test of Soviet good faith.

What I cannot do is to guarantee things that have not been told to me. And so the question is whether we can work out something which makes clear that we take the Senators' views very seriously, but which does not put us into a position of having to guarantee something beyond what has been discussed.

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Q. Mr. Secretary, was the figure of 60,000 or any other figure understood in your discussions with the Soviet Union?

A. I have always made clear that I could not guarantee any figure. How you interpret certain administrative agreements into figures, I have always made clear, could not be guaranteed by us.